

him for these two crimes!" muttered Murtagh. "Murtagh will explain you the way of it," said Moreen with effort to the old woman; "but 'twas thought best Malachy should go to America and—"

"And he borrowed the rent money for to give him the higher start!" said Murtagh hoarsely. "Now, mother, have conduct: we will pay the rent somehow. Smooth soft the face of you. Do you not see the neighbors coming?"

It may be that the old woman guessed something of the sin and shame of Malachy, her favorite son. Her old lips tightened and she said, "I'll go widin and brew the tay for them that would eat and drink wid us this morning."

IN the old yew hedge that had been young when the Kings first landed, the birds were singing a loud chime that sounded in cheerily with the laughter and chatter of the neighbors coming now up the path to the gate. Young and old, they were all poor, and mostly envious that another MacAvoy could start away to the land of promise, leaving behind him so many who could never hope to earn the passage money.

"Where's your bundle, Murtagh?" they called. "And when will you come back at all?"—"Write us the news, and tell them over there that plenty more of us are willing to come."

"Ah, then," said Murtagh heavily, "'tis Malachy you should be saying all this to; for 'tis Malachy is

bors pushed in, laughing, curious, and sympathetic. Moreen hesitated at the doorway. "I'll not go in," she said to Murtagh with quivering mouth. "You'd eat no bite with my face opposite you, and the joke on the neighbors' lips about us. God save you, Murtagh, and take you softly through this day!"

He looked after her as she hurried down the road, and reflected that he could have liked her well if she had not brought him his bad luck. Then he steadied his heart and went in to sit among his neighbors.

MURTAGH was slow to cope with the disaster that had overtaken him. He knew that the ship that lay at the end of the great road from the mountain had sailed without him. He knew that the rent was due, and that somehow it would have to be paid; for now under the new Act there were plenty in Ireland who stood ready to buy if the MacAvoy could not rent, and the landlords were glad to sell. Yet he sat, bewildered and inert amid the ruins of his hopes, just wondering what he could do next.

Some three weeks after his brother had gone away, Murtagh was at work in the green hollow that was once the treasure hold of the old Kings of the mountain. He had taken the notion that these few yards of rocky land might be used. He was building a cairn of the loose stones, and as he toiled

give me for this," she murmured, "no more than for the other griefs I caused him!"

THE next day Murtagh left the house after breakfast, and the two women saw him striding down the great road to the village by the sea. It was rare indeed for him to leave home, and Moreen was not without the fear that he would not come back; that somehow he would win across the sea to the country of his dreams. But he came home after nightfall,—came home in such guise that his mother put up her shaking hands to her face and turned away from him. He wore the garb of the constabulary, hateful cloak and cap and all. The old woman broke into tears.

"What would you have?" cried Murtagh fiercely. "Would you have me owe money to a woman?"

"How you must hate me!" cried Moreen. "How you must hate me, if you would shame yourself in the sight of the village wid that dress on you!"

FOR many a week Murtagh paid a bitter interest on his debt to Moreen. He had known that in joining the constabulary he had in a measure cut himself off, not only from his own kin, but from his own kind. His old neighbors must pass him now with a cold word. His assistants must be those with the Orange in them, or else others like himself who had sworn a loyalty to the English Government rather than to their own brethren. The other three policemen distrusted him. They set lynx eyes upon him to see that he was ready to arrest such of his former friends as evaded the law. The sergeant was cynically sure that the ostracism into which Murtagh had fallen would make him a martinet; but Murtagh was loyal, whatever his uniform might indicate. Any act of an Irishman was a law in itself, so far as he was concerned, and he would have lost his badge had it not been for a fortunate accident.

Old Sir Patrick Morgan, a famous geologist and a friend of the Commander of the Forces, was examining the country roundabout, particularly the mountain. The commander ordered that a policeman be given him as official guide, and Sir Patrick chose Murtagh.

Day by day, in sun or shower, the two climbed the mountain. Sir Patrick peered about with short sighted eyes at rocks and landmarks, or hammered at his specimens. At such moments Murtagh sat on a stone and glowered down toward the hated spot where the constabulary building stood, or he looked up at the top of the mountain where his mother's cottage—no, Moreen's cottage—perched over the treasure hollow of the Kings, and where he went every Sunday to see his mother. Melancholy visits they were, when neither knew what to say and the bond of their blood brought them no comfort. Moreen was never present, and Murtagh wondered if he was driving her from her own home.

Sometimes, when Sir Patrick had wandered out of sight, Murtagh would hide his face in his hands and shut his eyes against the vision of the road from the mountain that wound down to that sea he should never cross. Now and then when a storm arose, the two men would huddle under a sloping rock or a thick tree, and then, perhaps, under skilful questioning, Murtagh would tell bits of local history and legend, of which the heart of every Irish peasant is full.

Gradually they worked up to the top of the mountain, and one morning Sir Patrick fell with eagerness on the ancient treasure hollow of the Kings. Murtagh sat near him with his back turned to his home. He could hear the voices of the women; once he heard Moreen calling to the hens; but he never stirred. Some strong feeling was fighting in his heart, —a resentment at the mild spectated man who tapped at the old stones and peered down the old crevices and made himself familiarly at home on the soil of his ancestors. Everything had been taken from him: his chance in the new world, his home, and thus his sense of manhood. And old Sir Patrick chipping away carelessly was the symbol of the indifference that had been shown to him and all his rights.

SOMEWHERE, far off, he heard the sound of voices that gradually swelled. It reminded him vaguely of that day when he had been going to America and all the neighbors had come to wish him God speed. He glanced down at Sir Patrick, who as a rule liked to work in absolute quiet; but the old man did not hear the noise, stooping absorbed over the little stream. Murtagh turned away, and as the talk and laughter grew louder he climbed to the top of the hollow.

There stood his mother and Moreen shading their eyes with their hands, looking down the mountain. A crowd of villagers were coming up, shouting and cheering, and in their midst a tall man who waved a large white handkerchief.

"My eyes are deludhering me," said old Mrs. MacAvoy in a cracked, trembling voice, as she put her hands on Moreen's arm.

"They are not, then," said Moreen; "for 'tis Terence come home. What, woman, you're as white as a bone! Call back your blood to meet him!"

Uncertainly the old woman ventured a few steps forward and then laughed, and welcoming neighbors drew back while mother and son embraced.

"Isn't he the fine felly come back to make us

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Murtagh Paid a Bitter Interest on His Debt to Moreen.

gone, and I'm to bide with my mother yet awhile."

They stared at him in surprise. One or two shaded their eyes with their hands to look at him. Not one soul there but knew how ardently Murtagh had craved to go to America. None but wondered that he had let Terence go in his stead, and now Malachy.

"Ah, well," said a wizened old man, "him that'll give money to his kin to his own harm once is generous; twice is a fool. You are fit to be tied, I'm thinking, Murtagh."

"Wirra, is it buttermilk you have in your veins?" sneered an old woman. "Is it the sea you feared?"

"I'm sure 'tis better for your mother that you should stay, Murtagh," said a gentle faced young woman, her baby in her arms. "'Twas ever yourself was the softest spoke of her three childher."

Murtagh's face was set alike to their praise or their blame. "Come in and have a sup of tay," he invited, and turned to the door just as a light voice cried:

"And is it yourself will be taking on Moreen, now both the others is gone?"

His back was toward them, and only Moreen saw the look that leaped into his face. For a moment she was minded to cry to them all:

"Not he! I will never take up with Murtagh MacAvoy!" but instead she said with dignity, "My affairs have nothing to do with crossing the sea, nor are they the concern of my neighbors, I'm thinking."

At that Murtagh turned and said gravely, "It's only proud I or any MacAvoy would be to have Moreen Riley look at us. Will you come in for a sup?"

Mrs. MacAvoy came to the door, having summoned a look of welcome to her face, and the neigh-

he could not help thinking that what he was doing was of a piece with his whole life; for all his labor seemed to make the scattered stones no fewer, and underneath them lay rocky fissures, and where there was earth it was thin. The afternoon sun warned him that it was time for tea, and he clambered out of the hollow and glanced toward the cottage. On the doorstep sat Moreen Riley. The sun was finding some of its own gold in her hair. She was leaning back against the doorpost as if tired.

"Well, it should be her own home if she had her rights," he thought with an unaccustomed stir of sympathy. "It must be lonely in her place down the hill there. It comes over me she can't help having turned the heads of Terence and Malachy with the face of her."

So it was that his greeting, when he neared her, had something of kindness in it. While he was speaking his mother came to the doorway, her face anxious. The lines of it lightened when she saw the two in talk, and she said eagerly:

"So she's told you, lad, and you're thanking her." Moreen drew in her breath impatiently, and Murtagh asked:

"What's this she should be telling me, and I should be thanking her for?"

Mrs. MacAvoy hesitated. "I see I spoke too soon; but what matter? This good gurrl nere—"

"'Tis this," interrupted Moreen. "I know to my grief what I have cost you, Murtagh. Your rent was overdue, and the Kellys wanted your place. So I sold mine and bought yours,—I could do no less,—and your mother will be letting me live here; for I have nowhere else to go—"

Her voice broke and she threw herself into Mrs. MacAvoy's arms. "She's saved me from the shame of an eviction," said the old woman softly, "and I'll bless her with all my veins forever!"

"'Tis you I owe the rent to, then," said Murtagh thickly. "It'll be paid somehow; paid it will be!" He went into the house and sat down heavily at the table.

Moreen clung to the old woman. "He'll not for-